Social Work: guide to searching for literature
2017-2018
Guide to literature searching

1. Getting started

Why do I need to be able to search for literature?

- Find research to support your assignments e.g. back up your arguments
- It’s good academic practice to review past research before starting your work
- A strong list of references may help improve your grades

Where can I search for literature on my subject?

- **Library catalogue**: identify all books, ebooks, journals, DVDs, reports etc available to you
- **eResources**: search for articles on a particular topic (also called ‘databases’)
- **Online resources**: use search engines such as Google Scholar to identify relevant material on the internet

What is the difference between a book and a journal?

- **Book**
  Books tend to offer broad coverage of a subject/topic. Books can take up to 2 years to get published, so are not necessarily the most up-to-date source of information on fast moving topics.

- **Journal**
  A journal includes a number of **articles** (by different authors)
  They often include research articles where authors publish the results of research they have undertaken
  Journals are usually focussed on a specific topic
  They are published regularly so are often the most up-to-date source of information

Who can I ask for help?

If you need help at any time, please contact the Information Librarian for Social Work, Kate Stephenson. Alternatively, ask a question using the Chat service available on the Library Portal.
2. Developing a search strategy

Before you do anything you need to think about the topic and the keywords that describe your topic. This is probably the most important step.

Do not search for words such as “evaluate” “importance” “value” “discuss” these are not the keywords for your topic.

Do not type in the whole essay title.

How do I put together a search for my topic?

1. Think about your search terms: identify key search terms that describe your topic e.g.:
   
   *kinship*  *adoption*

2. Then brainstorm any alternatives that might be useful too.

   *Kinship:*  *kin; family; relations; relatives; grandparents.....*

Think about how your search terms relate to each other for you to find the answer to your research question.

3. Use AND between search terms to ensure both are found (some eResources may do a phrase search on your terms unless you use AND, however mostly they default to AND search – try a search to see the differing results.) AND will always give you less, narrowing your search.

   - *Adoption AND Kinship* - the article must have both words present in it to be found. If only one of the words is present the article will not be retrieved.
• Use OR between search terms to find either of the terms. Using OR will always give you more!
  
  o Adoption OR Fostering - the article must have at least one of the words present to retrieve the article. This is a useful for a search where there are many ways of saying the same thing.

• Use brackets to search for two terms that have a similar meaning and then “AND” them to a further term. If you can remember your maths, things in brackets are worked on first.

  \[(Adoption \text{ OR fostering}) \text{ AND kinship}\]  Searches the database for everything that contains the words “adoption or fostering” and then looks within them for articles that also have the word “kinship”.

• Apply some of these search tips to help you get the most out of your searches:
  
  o Use a * after the last letter common to all variations of the word. This is called truncation.

  \[Adopt^*\text{ finds} \]
  \[Adopt\]
  \[Adopts\]
  \[Adoption\]
  \[Adopted\]

  o Use “quote marks” to look for a phrase. This also works on Google.

  \[“Domestic violence”\] finds your exact phrase, rather than the term domestic in one part of your article and violence in another.
2. Accessing the eResources (Databases)

How do I access the eResources to search for journal articles?

You can access the eResources from the Social Work subject guide or the Library catalogue if you know the name of the resource you are looking to search.

1. Via the Social Work subject guide

To get to the subject guide from Solent Online Learning (SOL) in the top menu

   Library – Subject Guides – School of Sport, Health and Social Sciences – Social Work

Once on the subject guide, scroll to the eResources and Databases section:

   http://portal.solent.ac.uk/library/library.aspx

When you have clicked on a database title, you will get a screen with an icon which tells you about the resource and also gives you details of off campus password requirements.
2. Via the **Library Portal**

Find the eResources panel on the Library Portal and select Social Work from the Subject area drop-down menu:

![Library Portal Image]

2. Select which **eResource** to search from the list – click on the [ ] to look up off campus password information. Click on the title to access each **eResource**.

![CrossSearch Image]

3. Use the ‘Additional resources’ option to see a list of further databases to search.
4. Finding the full text of your results

After searching for articles, how do I locate the full text?

- Some eResources may give you full text straight away such as Emerald Health and Social Care or European NewsStream (for newspapers) – just follow the links!

- Some give you the details of the article but you need to find the full text of it yourself...

Finding the full text of an article (if not immediately available)

After searching in the eResource and finding a relevant article you can check if full text is available via the Library in two ways:

1. Some resources have a direct link that checks for you – if you see this, just click on it:

   ![Is it @ SSU?](image)

2. For others, you will need to search for the JOURNAL TITLE (that the article is published in) within the Library Catalogue to see if the Library subscribes to the full text:

   Paste or type the Article Title only (not the volume/issue/year or page details) into the Articles Tab search box:

   Example: A search for articles in Social Care Online leading to this article:

   ![Example: A search for articles in Social Care Online leading to this article](image)

   Example: Search Library Catalogue for the title of the journal the above article was published in:

   ![Example: Search Library Catalogue for the title of the journal the above article was published in](image)
Example: Search results for the journal “Professional Social Work” only available in print

Don’t forget to ensure you have all the reference details you’ll need if you want to use it in your assignment!

Do not Google journal titles, you will not be able to get into them, always go via the library portal.

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5. Inter Library Loans (ILL) service

No full text! The library doesn’t subscribe to the journal the article is published in so how do I get it?

- If an item is not held by the Library you can request a copy via the Inter-Library Loans (ILL) service (Level 5 and 6 students, postgraduate, researchers, academics only level 4 students contact Kate Stephenson)
- Both books and journal articles are available as Inter-Library Loans

Find out more about ILLs on the library portal (http://portal.solent.ac.uk/library/studying/inter-library-loans/step-by-step-guide.aspx) or from the social work subject guide.

Your request will then be processed; a copy of the article will be emailed to you (or photocopy posted). You only get one chance to open and print the article if emailed! For book requests, you will be notified when the book is available for you to collect. You can keep articles but books have to be returned by the date indicated.

6. Google Scholar

Having earlier said not to Google journal titles, there is an extremely useful Google facility, Google Scholar. https://scholar.google.co.uk/

You can set Google Scholar to indicate if an item is available at Southampton Solent University by going into the “settings” icon.

You can copy and paste articles or book titles into Google Scholar to see if they are freely available to you elsewhere if the University does not have access to them. Don’t forget to use quote marks to ensure that the exact title is searched for and not just something that contains all the words.

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7. More Support

The Social Work Subject Guide has more information on finding journal articles, including short videos on the techniques for finding and evaluating information and using the individual eResources and databases. Finally don’t forget you can come and see Kate Stephenson at anytime – email kate.stephenson@solent.ac.uk